

Exxon sees future for dum

Ex-Sharon Steel property could become a mall

BY KELLY BARTH

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FAIRMONT — A piece of property that has been an industrial waste dump for almost 20 years could eventually be developed into a shopping mall or a light industrial plant.

That's the future Exxon, the new owner of the former Sharon Steel property, says it has in store for the land off Lafayette Street in East Fairmont.

Exxon closed on a deal to buy the 107 acres Monday.

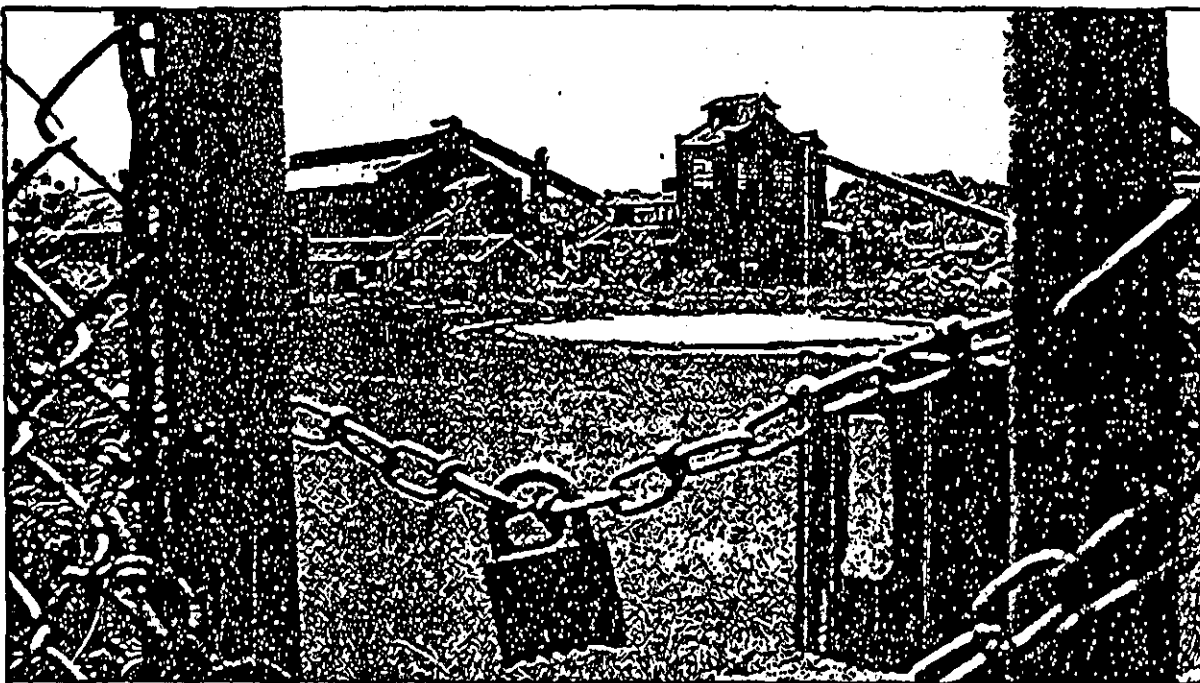
Representatives of the petroleum giant, the state Division of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency discussed their plans to redevelop the property Tuesday at a public meeting at East Dale Elementary School.

The EPA spent \$7 million from 1993-96 to remove hazardous wastes from the Superfund site. Exxon, with input from the EPA and DEP, plans to follow up to determine if any more cleanup needs to be done.

The meeting was held to begin forming a community liaison panel to help plan the cleanup process.

EPA will select the 20 members of the panel, scheduled to hold its first meeting at 5:30 p.m. June 30, at Circle W Club, Morgantown Avenue. The meetings will be open to the public.

John Hannig, project administrator for Exxon, said the company



Exxon, the new owner of the former Sharon Steel property, plans to begin removing some brick buildings, conveyors and other industrial leftovers

later this summer in preparation for a final phase of hazardous cleanup at the site.

decided to buy the property because it is liable for some of the contamination. Exxon owned Domestic Coke Corp., which operated a coke plant at the site from 1918-20.

"That's the connection that brings us to the table," Hannig said.

Sharon Steel Corp. bought the site in 1948 and operated a plant there until 1979, when it closed

after failing to comply with federal clean air and water regulations. Sharon Steel went bankrupt in 1991.

Fat Gaughan, an EPA community relations coordinator, said the agency is considering making the Fairmont cleanup a pilot for demonstrating a cleaner, cheaper and smarter way of tackling Superfund sites.

Gaughan said community input during the cleanup is a key to that.

"People who live across the site were here tonight telling us where certain things were buried," Gaughan said. "But what we'll likely do is grid it out and take samples throughout the site."

People who serve on the panel will serve as a communications link between the regulatory agen-

cies and Exxon, and the cor-

"I think I can wrap it in one statement," Hannig said. "We want to remediate the site safely, cost-effectively and quickly. We want to do it in such a way that human health and the environment are protected. We do all that in a relative time frame and allow the site to be redeveloped."

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